



## Input to the zero draft of the CFS Policy Recommendations on Youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)

18. March 2022

As a global network of 30 000 young agricultural professionals, Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD), wishes to express great enthusiasm for the focus on youth in the CFS workstream. Through a consultative process with the global YPARD community, YPARD offers the following inputs for consideration on the zero draft of the CFS Policy Recommendations on Youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, which have also been expressed in the Civil Society Mechanism's Youth Working Group collective consultation processes.

### **YPARD welcomes the following:**

- Emphasis on young persons as a key actor in the food system.
- Recognizing that policies should be formulated *not for youths* but *with direct engagement of youths*.
- Emphasis on the importance of youth leadership in small agricultural businesses and the need for supporting education to that effect.
- Emphasis on community-based education and research.

### **Nonetheless, YPARD views the following critically, and strives for the following improvements:**

- Explicit mention of climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, gender inequality, and responses thereto throughout the draft, which is currently missing context.
- An emphasis on the protection of youth as a strong but also vulnerable group, with an emphasis on our human rights– the right to food, the right to decent livelihoods, and the end to the exploitation of youth.
- Further emphasis on the needed increase in leadership roles of youth in the food and agriculture system, especially support, including financial support, of youth-led organizations, networks, and small- and medium-size businesses.
- Strengthening of language from “access” to “right to” across the text to provide a stronger basis for youth participation and leadership.
- Acknowledgement and addressing of youth unpaid and underpaid labor, which is a systematic challenge for youth in addition to youth unemployment.
- Equity-, not equality-based approach for all youth and especially young women, in order to address systemic barriers to all youths' diversity.

- Increased attention to interdisciplinarity (e.g. social and environmental sciences, business and organizational management), nexuses (e.g. water, energy, food) and cross-cutting themes (e.g. climate change) demanding a particular approach to youth's engagement (e.g. engagement open to young people with different academic backgrounds).
- Educational programs must be realistic about the limitations of agriculture (land access, physical labor, societal perception, etc.) as a profession and equip students to overcome these challenges (organizational and business management skills, communications skills, etc.). No program will remove doubts about "beyond a shadow of a doubt."
- Limited attention to the need for support to the youth with fewer resources to access opportunities to develop skills and educational opportunities.
- Agricultural digitalization is not sufficient to advance youth in green professions to their full potential; many also need support, financial and educational, for adopting existing best agricultural practices.